

143
A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE

D E A T H

OF

Mrs. SARAH JOHNSON,

PREACHED AT ISLINGTON

SEPTEMBER 18. 1774.

WITH

THE ORATION AT THE INTERMENT.

By NATH. JENNINGS.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. BUCKLAND, IN PATER-NOSTER ROW.

M.DCC.LXXIV.

[Price Six-pence.]

350

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TO THE
SURVIVING RELATIVES
OF THE
D E C E A S E D,

THE FOLLOWING
SERMON AND ORATION,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST;
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

AND SERVANT,

N. JENNINGS.

TO THE
SURVIVING RELATIVES

OF THE
DECEASED

THE FOLLOWING

ORATION


AND THE FOLLOWING

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M. J. J. J.

REVELATION XV. 3.

AND THEY SING THE SONG OF MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD, AND THE SONG OF THE LAMB, SAYING, GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; JUST AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS, THOU KING OF SAINTS.

WHEN our best and dearest friends are removed by the hand of death from the present state, our thoughts naturally follow them into that upon which they have entered; and we can hardly forbear enquiring, where their disembodied spirits reside, and how they are employed.

Upon these points we may derive great satisfaction from the Gospel of our divine Redeemer, where we are taught, with as much clearness as infinite wisdom judged requisite, in what manner the souls of men are disposed of when they leave the body, and how they are severally engaged according to their respective characters.

As the prospects which divine revelation discloses concerning the wicked and ungodly are very gloomy and terrifying, so the views which it gives us of the condition and employments of

the spirits of the just made perfect are very delightful and transporting; the consideration of which may well reconcile us to the loss of their presence and company here upon earth.

We have the fullest assurance that such as die in the Lord are unspeakably blessed; that they are fixed in a state of perfect purity and joy; and perpetually engaged in services of the most desirable and exalted nature.—The Text acquaints us with one of their leading employments. “They sing the song of Moses the Servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints.”

In the beginning of this Chapter the Apostle John, to whom the state of the church in future ages was revealed in a succession of striking and remarkable visions, acquaints us with the view he had of the seven last plagues which should be poured out upon it's adversaries, previous to it's state of distinguished prosperity and glory.—“And I saw another sign in heaven, ver. 1. great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” But while he was called to be a witness of the awful preparations which were made for the punishment of the enemies of God and his church, he was favoured with
a lively

a lively representation also of the safety and happiness of those who had kept their garments unspotted by the corruptions of Antichrist, and had been enabled to persevere in the practice of true and undefiled religion to the end of their warfare. For it follows, ver. 2. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God: and they sing the song of Moses the Servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints."

In this connection do the words of the Text stand: and although they more immediately refer to that state of pure and perfect bliss to which they should be advanced who vigorously opposed the errors, and withstood the rage of Antichrist, and through the assistance of heaven continued faithful unto death; yet are they descriptive of the state and employment of all true Believers upon their removal from the present world. According to this latitude of interpretation therefore, we shall,

I. Consider in general the view here given us of the joyful employment of glorified spirits.

II. Attend more particularly to the Subject-matter of this song.

III. Add such reflections as may occur from a review of the whole.

I. Consider in general the view which the Text gives us of the joyful employment of glorified spirits. "They sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb."

The idea which men have universally formed of the heavenly world is that of a state of perfect and permanent happiness. The Heathens had their Elysian Fields; and the Mahometans have their Sensual Paradise. But it is the Christian Revelation alone that has given us consistent and rational notions on this subject, and at the same time positive and convincing evidence of the certainty of Eternal Life. There we are taught to conceive of it as a state of intellectual and moral perfection, where every possible evil is excluded, and every possible good enjoyed by the happy inhabitants. The descriptions given of this state are mostly figurative, no other language being capable of conveying the sublime idea of perfect happiness. And as the language of joy is generally in Anthem and Song, the Spirit of inspiration, in condescension to human feelings, has adopted this mode among others of elevat-
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ing our conceptions of Celestial Bliss. This is the image adopted in the text ; and it is very expressive of the harmony and felicity of glorified saints. It intimates to us that they are perfectly happy in themselves, and perfectly satisfied with one another. While the friends they have left on earth are struggling with various infirmities, conflicting with numerous temptations, and exposed to the heavy strokes of adversity, they are eternally exempted from every human frailty and every painful sensation. While such as were once united to them by the firmest bonds of nature and affection are bemoaning the loss of them here below, they are rejoicing in the happy exchange they have made above. While those to whom they were once dear weep over their remains on earth, they with unutterable transport sing and exult in heaven. There do they tune their voices to heavenly anthems, and join an innumerable choir in chanting the songs of paradise.—For “ in God’s presence is fulness of joy, and at his right-hand are pleasures for ever more.” Psalm xvi. 11.

Were these departed spirits witnesses to the grief—did they behold the tears of their earthly relatives and friends on their account, and were they permitted to address them, their language would be, “ Weep not for us, for we are joyful : let not the thoughts of our departure trou-

ble you : for it hath proved to us the source of inexpressible happiness."

In heaven then all glorified spirits, as the effect of inward joy, sing aloud : and the song which there employs their tongues is called " the song of Moses the Servant of God and the song of the Lamb."

1. They are represented as singing the song of Moses the Servant of God.

This refers, we apprehend, to the celebrated song of this eminent lawgiver upon the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, recorded in the 15th chapter of Exodus. And saints in glory are said to sing this song, because there is a great affinity in point of sentiment between the sacred ode of Moses, and that here recited.

The song of Moses was a song of triumph over the malicious and cruel enemies of the children of Israel.—A song, in which the memorable exertions of divine power and mercy in their behalf, were faithfully recorded ; the destruction of their enemies strikingly described ; the happy effects of their deliverance justly foretold ; and their thankful oblations cheerfully laid upon the altar of Jehovah.

In

In like manner the song in which all the saints shall join in heaven is a song of triumph over enemies far more dangerous and powerful, and of praise for a salvation much more noble in it's nature, and much more beneficial in it's effects—a salvation in which divine power, goodness and mercy are wonderfully displayed, and for which the objects of it are laid under infinite obligations to the eternal God.

As the Israelites, when they had safely crossed the threatening sea, and had set their feet upon dry ground, triumphantly rehearsed the praises of that Almighty Deliverer, who had marvelously preserved them, while he took vengeance upon their adversaries; so the children of God, when they have safely crossed the sea of human life, and set their feet upon the heavenly plains, shall lift up their voices in songs of praise to that Almighty Being who hath brought them safely thither. Then shall they triumph in their compleat victory, not merely over temporal, but also over all spiritual enemies, the enemies of their inward peace, and the opposers of their final happiness. And then shall they bless the power and grace of Jehovah, for the enjoyments not only of earthly but heavenly blessings, with sentiments of the warmest gratitude and love, and with the most lively emotions of sacred joy.

“ They shall sing the song of Moses *the Servant of God.*”

This is the character here given of this eminent Lawgiver, and a truly honourable one it is. He indeed may be thus stiled in a peculiar manner; he bore a distinguished part, as the Minister of God, in the government of his ancient people; he was employed in the execution of various important affairs as the Messenger of Heaven; and gave many striking proofs of his fidelity and zeal in the divine service. This title, although in a less distinguishing sense, is given to all the saints. They are the servants of the living God; his faithful and obedient servants; who reverence his authority, and are conformed to his will. And a Badge of true dignity it certainly is.—A name this which confers much greater honour upon us than the enjoyments of any of those pompous titles which human vanity hath invented, and by which so many are anxiously desirous of being distinguished. But,

2. The saints in heaven are represented as singing the song of the Lamb,

By the Lamb here no doubt is meant the Son of God; the saviour of perishing sinners: and he is here, and in various other parts of sacred writ, spoken of as a Lamb, not only in reference to the

the meekness and gentleness which he discovered when here upon earth, but also to the sacrifice which he made of himself to satisfy divine justice, and to procure pardon and salvation for his people: of which the Paschal Lamb, among various other sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation, was a lively type. See John i, 29. 1 Cor. v. 7. and 1 Pet. i. 19.

Now saints in glory are here said to sing the song of the Lamb; or a song in which they are instructed by the Lamb of God; which has respect to the great and glorious deliverance which he hath wrought out for them, and which abounds with ascriptions of praise to his power and goodness,

From the representations of the gospel we learn that salvation by Christ will be one leading topic of contemplation and triumph in the heavenly world, and that while the work itself will be the subject of admiration and joy, the divine author of it will meet with the loudest acclamations of praise. Thus we are told in another part of this prophecy of John, that he heard the redeemed sing a new song to the Lamb, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and
hast

hast made us unto our God kings and priests." It is added, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Rev. v. 9. 10. &c.

As glorified saints, once joined their feeble voices in praising their Redeemer in the church militant, so in much more melodious and elevated strains shall they magnify his name in the church triumphant. To him they will then feel themselves to be under the strongest obligations; and these obligations it will be their constant endeavour to discharge: One way of doing which certainly will be by shouting forth his praises. But we proceed,

II. To attend more particularly to the subject-matter of this song, as given us in the text, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

As

As nothing trifling or foolish can employ the thoughts of glorified spirits, so nothing mean or low can be the subject of their public acts of devotion. As in heaven God shall be praised with the utmost seriousness and sincerity, so shall he be praised under a deep sense of his infinite excellencies, and which such dispositions as they ought to produce in the soul. Yea one chief employment of the celestial inhabitants will be to explore and celebrate the Perfections and Works of God; in doing which there will be found ample room for the most strenuous exertion of their enlarged powers, and an inexhaustible fund for pleasure and improvement. The song of Moses and the Lamb touches upon very important subjects, and such as saints in glory will love to celebrate.

1. The great and wonderful nature of the Works of God shall be made the subject of devout and joyful celebration in the world of glory.

The Works of God are various; but as they are all uniformly great and good, they consequently furnish abundant matter for admiration and praise.

For instance; if we attentively survey the Works of Creation, as far as they are manifest

to human knowledge and observation, what wonders of power, wisdom and goodness are there displayed! How vast the objects which present themselves to our view! How elevating the ideas which crowd in upon our minds! We are lost in the boundless extent; and while our thoughts traverse the universe, visit the immense heavenly bodies that roll around us, examine the earth on which we tread, and are intently fixed upon the almost endless objects of curious and useful investigation in vegetative, animal, and rational life, we are overwhelmed with astonishment, and may well cry out with awe profound, "Lo these are a part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him?" Job xxvi. 14. "Who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Job xi. 7,

Again, if we survey the footsteps of God's Providence, What great and wonderful things do we there behold! The plan of his natural and moral government is every way worthy of him by whom it was laid, and equally illustrates the exceeding greatness of his power, the depths of his wisdom, and the riches of his goodness: the object of it is beyond expression great; the execution of it indisputably wonderful.—As the purposes which heaven effects in the course of revolving ages are important and venerable; so the measures taken for this end are exceeding mysterious,

rious. Clouds and Darkneſs are often round the Almighty's throne, and we ſeek in vain to penetrate through the diſtreſſing gloom and learn what are the deſigns of heaven.

When vice is triumphant, and righteouſneſs is openly depreſſed—when the wicked remarkably proſper, and the righteous are ſorely afflicted—when diſſolute and profligate lives are long continued, and very uſeful and deſirable ones are taken away—when the riſing hopes of godly families are ſuddenly cut off, and the vain deſires of the profane are repeatedly gratified—when theſe events happen, as they often do, the dim eye of human intellect is ſorely perplexed in it's reſearches; it's views are confuſed and uncertain, vain man is hereby powerfully taught his own ignorance, and meets with a ſtriking comment upon that declaration of God himſelf, That as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo his ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.

The Works of Creation and Providence are then great and marvellous; and no leſs ſo are thoſe which are diſtinguiſhed by the pleaſing title of his Works of Grace,

Great and marvellous indeed is the Work of Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt! It's wonders increaſe upon us in proportion as we make

it the subject of close investigation. The better it is understood, the more it is admired; it is the most glorious of all the works of God; and which not only human, but also angelic powers may well contemplate with pleasing astonishment. In this great design the Perfections of Deity wonderfully concenter, and shine with peculiar brightness—"For great is the mystery of godliness. God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16.

And as the work of Redemption is in itself great and marvellous, so the methods which have been, and still are taken to spread the knowledge and impart the blessings of it, are truly memorable also. Great and marvellous have been the works of God to support the cause and bless the followers of his Son, as well as to curb the rage and frustrate the designs of his and their imbittered enemies; to dethrone sin; to establish truth, righteousness, and peace on the earth; to gather in his elect; and to prepare the way for the general consummation of all things.

These great and marvellous works of God are the objects of every humble Christian's serious contemplation and grateful praise here upon earth; but in a more peculiar manner the Text assures

assures us they will be so in heaven. In that happy state the souls of men will have much more accurate and extensive views of the works of God in their connection, amplitude, and use, than they can possibly have at present: and as their views are enlarged, matter for praise will proportionably increase.

The vast Works of Creation will be then seen in all their magnitude and beauty. Many glorious effects of God's creative power, of which we have now no knowledge, will then be disclosed; and such as are at present very obscurely discerned will then lie open to the free inspection of every enquiring soul. From an elevated point will glorified spirits survey the Works of Creation, and be pleasingly astonished at their almost boundless immensity, their several dependencies upon each other, their beautiful order and gradation, and the united testimony they bear to the power and goodness of God their Maker.

Then also the great designs of Providence will be laid open in all their lustre and glory. As the intellectual sight will be then amazingly strengthened and improved; so the darkness which now veils many of God's providential dispensations shall then be dispersed, and in the clear light of truth and knowledge shall they be seen and investigated by every glorified believer.

And

And then also shall the godlike purposes of divine Grace to save many sinners from hell, and bring them to heaven, be displayed in all their loveliness; their origin and end will be fully disclosed, and furnish the saints in glory with rich occasion for admiration and joy. These great and marvellous works of God will be then perfectly known; and harmoniously celebrated.

While we are groveling here below in a state of great darkness and perplexity, contracted in our views, and often mistaken in our apprehensions, our dear deceased friends who have departed hence in the faith, and whose absence from us we are ready to regret, are contemplating in perfect light the glory of their Maker's works, and ascribing loud and deserved praises to creating power, preserving goodness, and redeeming grace:

Great and marvellous are thy works, *Lord God Almighty.*

The infinite Power of God, which is a just object of terror to the wicked; which alarms the fears of the guilty in this world, and which will inevitably plunge them into perdition in the next, is the source of consolation and the subject of praise to all true believers. Holy pleasure mixed with solemn awe attends a contemplative view of this divine attribute even in the present life.

life.—This is the defence of the children of God, against the assaults of their adversaries; this is their security against final ruin. And as the Almighty Power of Jehovah is a spring of comfort to all sincere Christians on earth, so will it be to them in a more eminent degree the subject of joyful celebration in the realms of bliss and glory. The attentive survey of Jehovah's works will leave a deep impression of his infinite power upon the minds of the heavenly inhabitants, and no less forcible will their conviction be of the noble purposes for which it hath been and for ever shall be exerted.—Purposes which reflect the highest glory upon God himself, and which are replete with happiness to all who bear his image.

In heaven Jehovah shall be praised as the Lord God Almighty. This character will excite the profoundest reverence as well as the highest pleasure in the breasts of the heavenly worshippers: for as it will proclaim the infinite distance there is between them, and their Maker, so it will insure to them everlasting peace and safety.—For what power can controul the will, or alter the purposes of him who in might is infinite?—

2. The Justice and Truth of God's ways are celebrated in heaven as well as their great and marvellous nature: "just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

That God is strictly just and unalterably true is indisputable. There cannot possibly be any species of iniquity or any taint of falsehood in him whose nature is perfect. "He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deut. xxxii. 4.

Through the small degree of knowledge indeed, we now possess, and the remaining folly and perverseness of our minds, how ready are we to harbour injurious thoughts of his justice, and to admit credulous apprehensions concerning his faithfulness and truth! For when outward occurrences, or inward dealings with our souls do not concur with our own wishes, are we not apt to arraign the rectitude of God at the bar of human inquiry, or experience the workings of unbelief respecting his veracity? To their shame and sorrow the consciences even of sincere Christians here witness against them. But although these remains of a corrupt nature discover themselves on earth, yet they shall not, even in the smallest degree, be felt in heaven.

In the upper world glorified spirits celebrate the *Justice* of God,—his Justice towards friends and foes; the perfect righteousness of his dealings towards all ranks of creatures in heaven, on earth, and in hell. — There in a particular

particular manner do they acknowledge the justice and propriety of all those events which puzzled and disturbed their minds when here below; they then look back with entire satisfaction upon all the methods of divine providence and grace while they were pilgrims and sojourners here upon earth: the respective spheres of life in which they moved; the blessings with which their lives were crowned, and the afflictions with which they were mingled, the space of time which was allotted them in the present world, and the season and manner in which they were removed from it. They have no accusation to offer; no complaint to bring against the King of saints: in the whole of his management they heartily acquiesce, and sing a lofty song of praise to his Justice and Rectitude.

But the heavenly choir celebrate the *Truth* as well as the justice of their Maker. Just and *true* are thy ways. As a God of Truth the Almighty hath invariably revealed himself in all ages; and this title very properly belongs to him. "For his truth endureth through all generations." Ps. c. 5. As such he is justly extolled by his people now, but in a much nobler manner shall he be praised on this account hereafter. Then the truth of his predictions to the world at large; his inviolable regard to the promises made to the church in every age and in every

state; his fidelity to every individual that has made or shall make a part of it; his steady attachment to that covenant which through his Son he enters into with every true believer: and his immutable care to confer the blessings it contains, shall be the topics of joyful acclamation by glorified spirits.—The unchangeable Truth of God will be resounded through all the heavenly regions, and fill the blessed inhabitants with adoration and thanksgiving.

“Just and true are thy ways, *thou King of saints.*”

The people of God are repeatedly spoken of in the sacred oracles under the title of Saints; and with obvious propriety. For although by nature they are as corrupt and depraved as others, yet they are now by the renewing of the Holy Ghost made habitually holy, 1 Cor. vi. 11. and when they stand around the throne of God above shall be complete in holiness.

Now these pure and happy souls have God for their King. The great God indeed is the Sovereign of all his creatures. He exercises universal dominion over the works of his hands; and his right thereto is founded on the nature of things, and the relation he bears to them. He is the Creator and of course the Sovereign

vereign and Lord of all. All creatures owe him subjection and obedience, and over all he rules without controul. But saints are under his peculiar government. He is their King in a sense which can be applied to none but such as fear and love him, and have his image drawn upon their hearts. Being reconciled to him through the death of his Son, God rules over them in mercy and love, and for purposes as salutary to them as they are honourable to himself. His laws are now clearly revealed for the regulation of their temper and conduct, and to these they render sincere and cheerful obedience. His arm is now stretched out for their protection and support, and under his guardian care they rest secure and happy. The blessings of his government are experienced in part on earth, but shall be still more richly enjoyed in heaven. All holy souls now rejoice in this their Sovereign, but in far more exalted strains shall shout forth his praises under this character when they are hereafter admitted into his blissful presence. There shall God reign over his redeemed through unending ages, and the effects of his government to them will be unspeakably advantageous.

This then is the substance of the song of Moses and the Lamb, as given us in the text, in which glorified spirits most devoutly join.

This we trust is the happy, the noble employment of our deceased friend. While we are endeavouring to improve the affecting providence of her removal hence, we have satisfactory reason to believe, that her immortal spirit is now inquisitively searching into the works of her God and Saviour, and melodiously singing with the general assembly and church of the first-born, GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; JUST AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS, THOU KING OF SAINTS. *

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. Let us be thankful for the pleasing descriptions of the heavenly world which are given us in the gospel of Christ.

Various are the representations there given us of the World of Glory, all of which are of the most delightful and transporting nature. The several images which are there used to give us an idea of it's blessedness are inexpressibly engaging. The figures by which it's employments are described are bold and strong. In short, all that is

* This amiable person was the wife of Mr. Joseph Johnson of Lawrence-Lane, London; to whom she had been married not quite twelve months. She was delivered of a daughter on Monday September 5th, and died on the Monday following in the 29th year of her age.

said

said of the heavenly world in the sacred Scriptures is adapted to give us the liveliest conceptions our minds can form of the sublime joys and ravishing bliss which are there to be possessed. And how thankful ought we to be for this information. To God, Christians, we owe the discoveries as well as the hopes of heaven. To him therefore render praise. Devoutly bless him that he hath set such prospects before your eyes in the Gospel of his grace to recruit your sinking spirits, to support your feeble minds, under all the dangers and toils of your present pilgrimage. Attentively notice this instance of divine goodness; and let God's name be praised.

2. Let the consideration of the state to which our deceased believing friends are advanced, and the manner in which they are employed, mitigate our sorrow on account of their removal hence.

When our dearest friends and nearest relatives are by the stroke of death removed from our sight it is unnatural not to feel. The springs of grief are then opened, and sorrow sits upon our sinking hearts.

But yet we ought not to indulge this sorrow to excess: many are the considerations which have a tendency to moderate it. Amongst which this is one to such as mourn over the dis-

olution of those who in the days of their pilgrimage feared and loved God, namely, that their removal hence is to their own unspeakable advantage—that they are released from this troublesome and sinful world, and are with heart-felt joy and rapture singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

With this thought I would wish you, my Friends, to comfort and support yourselves, who have been lately visited with a bereaving dispensation of divine providence, and on whose account more particularly we have been led to the consideration of the present subject. Your trial is severe; I heartily sympathize with you under it, and should rejoice to be in any degree instrumental in relieving your sorrows, and shedding a ray of comfort upon your souls. And surely all sources of support and consolation are not cut off even under this melancholy providence.

The desire of your eyes, who was much respected while living, and whose death is sincerely lamented by many, hath indeed been suddenly taken from you. But whither is she fled? And how is her immortal spirit employed? Blessed be God, you have good evidence that she is now singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. What a consolation is it that you have reason to believe she was not called to meet death before she was prepared

pared for it ! that she did not enter into eternity, until by a living faith in Jesus she had secured her eternal happiness !

She is taken away indeed at an early period of life ; but the life which we trust she now lives is infinitely preferable : reflect on her felicity, and let that quiet your minds. None of the glorified spirits wish to return to earth again. They have dearer friends and nobler joys than what this poor perishing world can possibly afford ; and amongst various topics of praise and thanksgiving which there engage their thoughts, their entire release from the troubles and sins of this imperfect state is certainly one. Let these considerations then be cherished and encouraged, that your souls may submissively bow to the divine will under your present affliction.

3. Let the subject of the Songs of Zion be improved for present comfort—"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." This is the song of saints in heaven, and may very pertinently with a view to present consolation be sung by saints on earth.

Are the works of God no less just and true than they are great and marvellous ? Do they as loudly proclaim his unspotted rectitude and
inviolable

inviolable faithfulness as the exceeding greatness of his power and majesty? Let every fearful thought then be instantly dismissed. Let every rebellious sigh be hushed in the Christian's breast. We may not now be able to fathom many of the depths of divine providence, or to account for many of the divine proceedings: yet surely it will afford present joy to reflect that this shall be done hereafter. In heaven all clouds of ignorance and misapprehension shall be removed. There our God fully reveals the illustrious glories of his Nature, Perfections and Works, and the consequence is that he shall be loudly and universally praised. What streams of present comfort flow from these truths! Here then let mourning souls drink and be satisfied.

4. Let us all be ambitious to join hereafter in this delightful song, and for that end let us now seek an interest in the Divine Favour through the Redeemer.

To be happy hereafter is the common wish of mankind; but oh! on what mistaken grounds do many build their expectations of future happiness! In vain, utterly in vain, will it be to expect future felicity if we are not now interested in the Favour of God through Jesus Christ; if our sins are not pardoned through the efficacy of his atonement, and a covenant of peace is not established between God
and

and our souls. If you wish then to join the company of the children of God in the next world, seek an interest in his love through the Mediator in this. To spend a blissful eternity in singing the praises of God and the Lamb is an object worthy of our supreme ambition. Miserable shall we be indeed if we attain not unto it. But if we are thus distinguished our happiness will be unutterably great. If therefore any of you have hitherto neglected all serious concern about a matter of such infinite importance, I would admonish you by all that is sacred to trifle thus no longer lest it should issue in your everlasting ruin.

In a particular manner let that instance of mortality which we are this day aiming to improve quicken your attention to these things. What security have you against as short a warning of death's approach as our deceased friend was indulged with? Upon what grounds can you safely conclude that you shall not be amongst those who shall next be summoned to the Tribunal of Heaven? What more brittle than human life! What more uncertain than all human enjoyments! By this instance of mortality you learn how soon the most tender and pleasing connections may be dissolved, and how suddenly painful breaches may be made in the most happy and harmonious families. And will you then fix

your dependence upon what is so treacherous and delusive? Will you direct your ambition toward nothing higher or better than this world can yield? Strange infatuation! rather permit me to direct it to objects far more noble, and deserving.

To see the face of God with comfort hereafter—to join the general assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, and with them praise and glorify God in a state of perfect bliss for ever—these are objects worthy of your warmest aspirations, and your most vigorous pursuit. In a matter of such infinite importance it is impossible to be too attentive or too diligent. To these things then let me earnestly intreat you to direct your first thoughts. To an interest in these privileges, for your own sakes, never O never be indifferent: and if you really wish to obtain them, now seek an interest in the divine favour through the blessed Mediator. As sinners by nature and practice you have indeed lost all just claim to so important a blessing: but to recover this for all true believers the Son of God became incarnate; perfectly obeyed the divine law through every part of his life; at length died the accursed death of the cross, and as a testimony of the efficacy of his sufferings, and the success of his mediation rose from the dead on the third day. All therefore who bear the foremen-
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tioned character become through him personally interested in the divine favour, and are made heirs of eternal salvation. Through this exalted Mediator the Almighty waits to be gracious. "To-day then, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." As guilty and condemned creatures implore the forgiveness of your sins through the merits of an all-sufficient Saviour. As depraved and impotent creatures supplicate the renewing influences of God's blessed Spirit. Importunately pray to be thus distinguished. Eagerly seek to be thus blessed. And may God of his infinite mercy through Jesus Christ hear your prayers, and abundantly fulfil your wishes to his own glory and your eternal joy.

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IT is an observation of an inspired writer, that human life "is even a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanishes away." This humbling and awakening truth is here strikingly exemplified; for we are now committing to the silent grave the body of one, who in the bloom of her days was suddenly cut off out of the land of the living, and quickly summoned to the bar of God, amidst various opening prospects of worldly felicity.

To her indeed, we have good reason to believe this solemn change hath proved unspeakably advantageous. For as she deservedly possessed the esteem of her earthly friends and acquaintance; so she gave substantial evidence that she was not destitute of the special favour of her God. This infinitely important blessing she was
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early taught to seek after through Jesus Christ—in this we trust she was savingly interested here below, and now tastes the richest fruits of it in the realms of Glory.

But as our principal business on these occasions is, to admonish and instruct the living, and not to sound the praises of the dead, who are equally indifferent to human censure or applause; permit me therefore to urge upon you those important and useful lessons, which are plainly derived from this gloomy and distressing providence.

And surely one admonition which forces its way to the mind of every attentive observer of this instance of human frailty is this,—“Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.”—The voice which issues from that opened grave conveys such sounds as these to every listening ear.—“Be wise sometimes to seek the one thing needful.”

This affecting instance of mortality reproves with irresistible energy their folly and madness, who fondly presume on the continuance of life for many years to come, and as the effect of that self-confidence live without God in the world.—It persuasively calls upon the young and thoughtless, the vain and gay to lay to heart their latter end; lest coming suddenly the great arbiter of life
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and death should find them unprepared. Yea, it admonishes us all, of every age and of every character, to draw off our attention from things that are seen and temporal, and to fix it steadily on things which are not seen and eternal; to die in our meditations daily, and to live more than ever to the glory of God our Maker.

Do the consciences of any of you then who are the spectators of this mournful scene bear a decisive testimony, that you have hitherto slept on securely in the tents of sin? That you are yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity? That you are destitute of the fear, and love of God, and utter strangers experimentally to repentance, faith, and holiness? That you never yet sought after the pardon of your sins, the justification of your persons, and the eternal salvation of your immortal souls through the obedience and sufferings of Jesus, and are consequently without hope as to futurity? Do your consciences, I say, bear this witness against you? O then, let not this fresh admonition be shamefully disregarded.—Hear ye sinners the awakening voice of divine wisdom; and lest ye should be suddenly cut off in the midst of your follies and sins; under the wrath of God, and the painful anticipations of future condemnation, give diligent heed to the things which belong to your everlasting peace. “Now is the accepted time,

now is the day of salvation :” now therefore seek the mercy of God through Jesus Christ : now implore the influences of the blessed Spirit to quicken and renew your souls, to form them for the service of God on earth, and fit them for the blessed vision and ravishing enjoyment of him in heaven.—The promises of divine grace to returning sinners are full and free. The threatenings of divine purity and justice against the finally impenitent and unbelieving are most solemn and alarming. Arise then ye guilty sleepers, and call earnestly upon an offended, but through the blessed Emmanuel, a forgiving God, lest in the blackness of darkness you should bemoan your folly for ever.

But I trust some present are of a contrary character. — I entertain the pleasing persuasion, that I am now addressing some who have been taught the worth, and have been enabled to seek after the peace and happiness of their immortal souls—Who from a deep conviction of the evil of sin, have felt the symptoms of evangelical repentance—Who, from pleasing discoveries of the power and grace of Christ, have been enabled, in the exercise of faith, cheerfully to entrust their souls in his hands ; and as the natural effect of a soul-satisfying knowledge and love of God have cheerfully entered upon his service, and are joyfully waiting for the promised salvation.

To such this mournful event conveys much wholesome instruction. It solemnly warns you, Sirs, against negligence and sloth in your Master's service. It reminds you of that important duty of doing whatsoever your hand findeth to do with all your might. It teaches you to stand prepared for painful disappointments, and heavy trials while you are sojourners upon earth, to converse more frequently with the great truths of your holy religion, to walk humbly and closely with God, and to live in the constant expectation of your approaching dissolution.

You indeed, the Relatives of our deceased young friend, are more immediately interested in this bereaving dispensation of divine Providence; to you therefore, I would suggest a few thoughts for your comfort and direction.

You have lost, it is true, a valuable and affectionate relative, and in circumstances peculiarly distressing: it is no wonder then that your tender passions are painfully affected. But by whose order and appointment was this done? Even by the order and appointment of that great God, who doth all things well—Who hath an undoubted right to dispose of us and our concerns as he thinks fit, and who in the execution of this right will never transgress the bounds of justice and truth. Peace then to every
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angry and rebellious thought; and let this be rather the submissive language of your hearts—
 “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

The Almighty in the course of his Providence hath been pleased to make this unexpected breach upon your Family: but, thanks to his rich goodness and grace, you do not sorrow as without hope; having good evidence, that this your deceased Relative sleeps in Jesus.

And although you have now conveyed her breathless corpse to the silent grave, to see corruption and moulder into dust; yet the gospel of our divine Redeemer gives us full assurance, that there is a period coming when by the finger of Omnipotence every grave shall be opened, and the dead be universally raised to life again. At this solemn period every faithful disciple of Christ shall be raised in Glory. This corruptible shall then put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality. The bodies of the saints shall then be fashioned like unto the glorious body of the divine Redeemer, and being inhabited by perfectly pure and upright spirits, they shall enjoy their full consummation of bliss in the Paradise of God for ever.

Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words, and at the same time, let it be your ambition, by God's assistance, to be followers of her, who now, we hope, through faith and patience inherits the promises, so far as she was a follower of Christ. As earthly sources of comfort and joy fail, direct your thoughts and desires to such as are heavenly. While your most pleasing and tender connections here below are suddenly dissolved, let it be your concern to form a friendly connection with that unchangeable God, who rules above; a connection unspeakably beneficial and eternally permanent, and which through the blood of the covenant is established with every true believer. While the shafts of death are thus flying near you, and affecting you in a very tender part, let the thoughts of your own hastening dissolution be familiar to your minds; and may God by the rich supplies of his grace enable you so to live, that you may have no just cause of being afraid to die; but may depart hence with safety and comfort; have a happy meeting with your dear deceased friend, and all the redeemed of the Lord, in the realms of pure and perfect bliss, and there praise and serve God together, world without end. Amen.

T H E E N D.

